

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 NEA-10 IO-13 COME-00 /082 W
-----004749 240802Z /20

P R 240627Z SEP 77
FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3517
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L LENINGRAD 1245

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PINT, CSCE, UR
SUBJ: YOM KIPPUR IN LENINGRAD SYNAGOGUE

REF: (A) LENINGRAD 1188, (B) LENINGRAD 1181

1. YOM KIPPUR SERVICES CONDUCTED WITHOUT INCIDENT IN
LENINGRAD SEPT 21-22. IN VISITS TO SYNAGOGUE EVENING
SEPTEMBER 21, AT ABOUT NOON AND AGAIN AT 4 P.M. SEPT 22,
CONGENOFF OBSERVED NO OVERT POLICE SURVEILLANCE, IN CONTRAST
TO LAST YEAR WHEN LONE MILITIAMAN OBSERVED OUTSIDE DURING
DAYTIME SERVICES. SYNAGOGUE EXTREMELY CROWDED DURING FIRST
TWO VISITS, WITH SEATING COMPLETELY FILLED, PEOPLE STANDING
IN AISLES, IN VESTIBULE, ON STAIRS AND IN COURTYARD OUT-
SIDE. CROWD SIZE DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE, BUT AT HEIGHT
OF ATTENDANCE, HARD TO IMAGINE THERE MANY FEWER
THAN 3,000 PRESENT. BY MID-AFTERNOON CROWD HAD DWINDLED
CONSIDERABLY, WITH SOME EMPTY SEATS AND FAR FEWER
STANDEES, THOUGH SYNAGOGUE LEADERSHIP PREDICTED ANOTHER
SWELLING IN LAST HOURS BEFORE SERVICES' CONCLUSION
AT SUNDOWN. YOM KIPPUR ATTENDANCE CONSIDERABLY HIGHER
THAN AT LAST WEEK'S ROSH HASHONAH OBSERVANCES, WHICH,
AT FULLEST, PROBABLY SOMEWHAT LESS THAN 2,000.
SERVICES YESTERDAY SEEMED BETTER ATTENDED THAN ANY OF
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THE HIGH HOLY DAY OBSERVANCES LAST YEAR.

2. AS LAST YEAR, VIRTUALLY ENTIRE CONGREGATION
COMPOSED OF ELDERLY MEN AND WOMEN. A SMALL BUT VERY
VISIBLE SPRINKLING OF YOUNG PEOPLE, SOME, IT APPEARED,
THE TEEN-AGED OR SLIGHTLY OLDER CHILDREN OF REFUSENIK
FAMILIES OR ACTIVISTS PREPARING TO EMIGRATE, ALSO

PRESENT. NUMBER OF MIDDLE-AGED (EPJS-40'S) MEN SEEN
BY CONGENOFF AT ANY ONE VISIT NEVER MORE THAN 3-4.

3. SEVERAL WORSHIPPERS MADE POINT OF INFORMING CONGENOFF
THAT SERVICES, AS REPORTED REF A, NOT BEING CONDUCTED
BY REAL CANTOR. ONE PERSON DISPARAGINGLY SAID ACTING
CANTOR WAS PERSON WHO NORMALLY CHANTS AT FUNERALS.
ANOTHER SAID IT WAS SHAMEFUL NOT TO HAVE REAL CANTOR,
"FOR FIRST TIME IN FIFTY YEARS." GENERAL VIEW OF FUTURE
OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY HERE GLOOMY.

4. IN ADDITION TO CONGENOFF, YESTERDAY'S SERVICES
VISITED BRIEFLY BY FRENCH CONSUL GENERAL. OTHER FOREIGN
GUESTS SEEMED TO CONSIST MOSTLY OF AMERICAN TOURISTS,
THOUGH ONE MEXICAN JEW ALSO PRESENT. IN FOOTNOTE TO ROSH
HASHONAH CABLE, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT AMONG FOREIGN
VISITORS TO SYNAGOGUE LAST WEEK WERE TWO ISRAELI
DELEGATES TO XXIV INTERNATIONAL NAVIGATION
CONGRESS, INCLUDING DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ISRAEL PORTS
AUTHORITY, ITZHAK M. RAHAV.

5. FINALLY, SINCE SENDING REF. B LAST WEEK,
AT LEAST ONE MORE REFUSENIK, ALEKSANDR CHERTIN, HAS
BEEN ADDED TO LIST OF THOSE SUMMONED BY KGB HERE IN
CONNECTION WITH SHCHARANSKIY CASE, BRINGING TOTAL TO
14. NEUBERT
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition History: n/a
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